Spill Scene

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Spill Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Program

Washington State Department of Ecology

Spill Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Program

2007–2008 Report

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View from the Wheelhouse

During challenging economic times, relationships will help us exceed the high expectations of our public – and ourselves.

The last two years brought some amazing changes and like life itself, some of it was good and some it could have been better. This fall our state and national elections grabbed everyone’s attention. It was a fascinating and important time when the economy and the environment became a main focus of the election. Like so many states, we also felt the sting of increasing gas prices and an emerging state budget deficit. In our state we saw winter flooding that paralyzed communities, requiring my response team to deal with literally hundreds of potential oil and chemical releases. There has also been much discussion around the world about climate change, “carbon footprints” and going “green.” While enthusiasm for these initiatives has to be tempered with economic realities, we believe this and our spill work go hand in hand with ensuring a sustainable economy and a high quality of life. Governor Gregoire and the Legislature have an aggressive plan to restore the health of Puget Sound; an important element of which is continuing to make progress toward achieving the legislative goal of “zero spills.”

The upcoming 20th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez and the huge budget deficit challenging my program, allow us to reflect on the question that is so often asked of state government – why is our spill work important?

In Washington State the environmental and public health/safety impacts of oil and hazardous material spills result in a very high level of public visibility. An oil sheen on Lake Union can make national news. When a family’s home has to be evacuated, an oyster grower’s future harvest is damaged, or a tribe’s ancestral beaches are impacted, to them it is a catastrophic spill. The resulting social, economic and environmental effects should not be minimized. The public’s expectation for government and industry is much greater today than it was 20 years ago. It is a heavy burden and we do not bear it alone. Relationships are essential to ensure corporate diligence and public vigilance. In our state:

- Companies are challenged to be well prepared to respond aggressively to spills through better contingency planning and oil spill drills.
- Spill prevention activities including corporate investment, vessel and facility inspections, and oil transfer monitoring have dramatically reduced the likelihood of spills over 10,000 gallons.
- When spills do happen, our broader community is now able to deploy a rapid and aggressive response.

The work of the Spills Program and our many capable partners has made Washington State the “gold standard” not only in the nation, but the world.

As you read this report, you will find that the last two years were filled with many achievements – Governor Gregoire and United States Coast Guard Admiral Houck renewed the Memorandum of Agreement and protocols at the Oil Spill Summit to expand the partnership between Washington State and the Coast Guard. For the first time since 1999, we received year-round funding for the response tug at Neah Bay. And, in the realm of "prevention and response," we completed the cleanup and removal of the *SS Catala* wreckage at Ocean Shores during the fall of 2007. Our most important work is to maintain the community's focus and keep a steady hand on the rudder to fight complacency.

Looking forward, our program like those in so many other state agencies and businesses are facing lean and challenging financial times. Because of our program's declining revenue, tough choices will need to be made among many important competing initiatives and programs during the 2009 legislative session. I will be working with our Governor and the Legislature to build support and ensure that we continue to make progress towards "zero spills."

In Washington, about 15.3 billion gallons of oil are transported by vessels, pipelines, railcars, and trucks through our state every year. That is an incredible volume and while the total volume of oil spilled has decreased significantly, the total number of reported spills over the past 20 years has not gone down. Depending on funding, we hope to be able to make additional progress with our partners in industry, the Coast Guard and public on these chronic pollution sources. We cannot allow a low probability spill like the Exxon Valdez with its high consequences to occur in our state. We must continue public vigilance, industry diligence, and sustain the state's investment in spill prevention, preparedness and response to ensure that our environment and our economy thrive. I look forward to strengthening our partnership with you in 2009, and hope you enjoy "Spill Scene."

Hole-in-the-wall, Neah Bay, Washington.

Dale Jensen
Spill Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Program Manager

2007 - 2008 HIGHLIGHTS

PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic Signings at Oil Spill Summit

On June 28, 2007 U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Richard Houck and Governor Christine Gregoire convened an Oil Spill Summit to renew the 2001 Memorandum of Agreement, expanding the partnership between Washington State and the Coast Guard. Two weeks ahead of the Summit the agencies held a televised public meeting to present their proposed shared strategic work plan. At this meeting, a diverse panel of experts and the general public provided written and oral comments on the shared strategic work plan. The success of the Summit, the update to the shared strategic work plan and the renewed partnership commitment ensures the highest environmental protection for Washington.

> "We clearly have one of the best oil spill programs in the country. That said, our greatest enemy is complacency – we need to renew our vigilance and we must pursue continuous improvement in our programs."
>
> – Governor Gregoire

Spill Professionals Gather for First Clean Pacific Conference

The Clean Pacific Conference, hosted by Ecology, featured many presentations and panel discussions by professionals from private industry, regulatory agencies from Canada, US coastal states, and other countries. The conference provided an important opportunity for the West Coast spill community to gather and discuss common oil and chemical emergency planning, spill prevention, and emergency response issues. In addition, discussions were held on marine firefighting, vessel salvage, port and maritime security. The conference is sponsored by Pacific States/BC Oil Spill Task Force. The next conference is scheduled for Portland, Oregon, from September 14-16, 2009.

When Given Equipment and Training, Locals Respond to Spills

Early actions taken in a response can make a significant difference to minimize damages from oil spills. Thanks to a $1.45 million grant program authorized by the 2006 Legislature and administered by Ecology, sixty-one local and tribal government agencies across the state are now better prepared to quickly contain oil spills. In 2007, Ecology distributed new response equipment to 99 locations across the state (Figure 1). This includes 67 oil spill response trailers containing 54,800 feet of oil containment boom plus another 32 repositories of other types of response supplies. More than 1,000 local first responders were trained to use the equipment. These resources expand the existing response assets that are provided by industry and others.

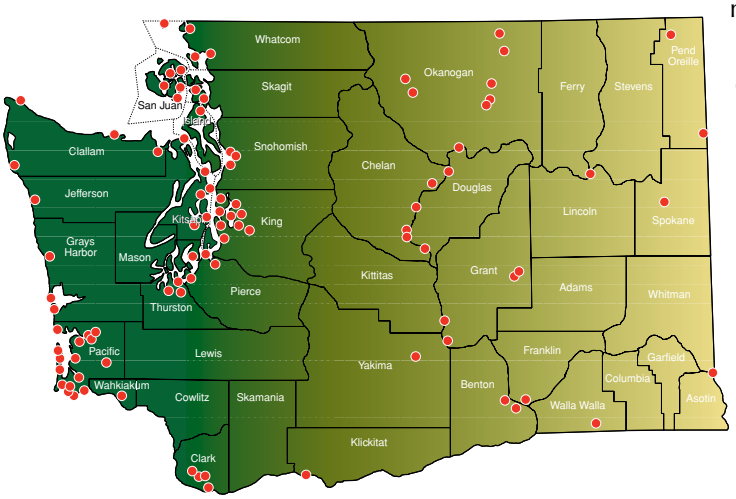


FIGURE 1
Locations of spill response equipment distributed by Ecology to improve local response to oil spills.

The new equipment has been deployed at least 40 times in the past two years. For example, responders from the Tulalip Tribe used boom and absorbent materials to contain a 70 gallon diesel fuel spill after the 65 foot fishing vessel *Saint Nicholas* sank at the Tulalip Marina. Their timely and effective actions helped minimize damage to the environment and enhanced effective recovery of the oil.

Technology Allows Early Assessment and Oil Tracking

Specialized aerial observation platforms are used for the early detection and assessment of oil spills. In 2007-2008, Ecology and the Coast Guard worked with the King County Sheriff's Office and the Washington State Patrol (WSP) to expand shared use of their aerial platforms. Both the King County Sheriff's Guardian One helicopter and the WSP fixed wing aircraft are equipped with Forward Looking Infrared Radar (FLIR) capability. FLIR technology allows responders to see oil spills on water at night.

Through an Ecology grant, Guardian One was enhanced with electronic mapping equipment. That equipment has proven to be effective on several occasions for estimating spill area and volume. The WSP aircraft is also able to provide an aerial assessment of spills by transmitting information and video documentation to responders on the ground. This technology has been used to perform periodic aerial surveillance of Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca to detect intentional and accidental discharges from commercial ships and other sources.

Ecology has also added radio tracking buoys to our response inventory. The devices have both a flashing strobe beacon and a radio location transponder. Deployed by air, boat or from the shore, these buoys help us track the movement of oil slicks on the water during heavy fog and at night. Exercises with the equipment have demonstrated the buoys' effectiveness up to a mile away.

Oil Spill Advisory Council

Understanding the importance and power of public involvement, the Legislature created the Oil Spill Advisory Council (OSAC) in 2005. OSAC helps to maintain the state's vigilance in the prevention of oil spills to marine waters. Ecology works closely with the Council to inform and actively seek public feedback. Ecology provides technical information, spill data and participates in the Council's subcommittees and public outreach opportunities. The Council has provided advice to Ecology on various rulemakings undertaken since 2005, including the oil transfer and contingency planning rules published in 2006.

Columbia and Snake River Spill Response Initiative

The Columbia and Snake River Spill Response Initiative (CSR-SRI) is a collaborative effort by local, state, and federal response partners and industry to meet challenges of aggressive oil spill responses in our inland areas. This effort brings together resources specifically tailored for the rivers, including emergency contact information for local responders, mutual aid agreements, customized strategies for oil spill response, modified maps of the area, and more equipment and training opportunities.

The CSR-SRI paid off in providing a well coordinated response to the grounding of the 87 foot tug *Deschutes* on the Columbia River in December 2007. Strong winds drove the tug aground, breaching a 6,000 gallon fuel tank. The CSR-SRI members sprang into action and quickly deployed boom around the vessel, minimizing the threat of a spill.

NEW INITIATIVES

New Oil Transfer Rules are Making a Difference

Over 41 million gallons of oil are delivered over Washington's sensitive waterways every day. In 2004, the Legislature broadened Ecology's authority for monitoring oil transfers occurring over water, including vessel-to-vessel transfers, and transfers between vessels and fixed or mobile facilities. Ecology's new oil transfer rules regulating both fueling and bulk oil cargo transfers went into effect in October 2006. The rules require that Ecology be notified in advance of these transfers so inspections can be scheduled. A web based notification system has been developed and this information is shared with the Coast Guard. The rules also require that tank vessels and oil handling facilities pre-boom high flow rate oil transfer operations, whenever it is safe and effective to do so (Figure 2). Alternative protective measures must be in place when pre-booming doesn't occur. Since the rules have been in effect, 80% of all oil transfers subject to the requirements have been pre-boomed. Many other vessels and facilities that are not required to be pre-boomed under the regulations have been pre-booming nonetheless to reduce the impact of spills that might occur.

FIGURE 2
Prebooming is now a required precautionary measure for oil transfers over water when the conditions are safe and effective to do so (which, to date, has been more than 80% of the time).

Other rule requirements include:

- Developing response plans and operations manuals for mobile facilities such as tank trucks.
- Having response equipment immediately available at transfer locations.
- Reporting of oil transfer volumes from marinas and boatyards on a quarterly basis.

State Legislature Continues to Focus on Oil Spills

In early 2007 the Legislature changed the state's definition of oil to now include biologically derived plant oils and fuels, such as biodiesel. The new definition has been incorporated into Ecology's rules, creating new regulations for the transfer and storage of biofuels on navigable waters.

Also in 2007, the Legislature raised the ceiling for assessing natural resource damages from a maximum of $50 to $100 per gallon of oil spilled. This new upper limit will more fairly compensate the public for damages to natural resources. In 2008, Ecology proposed a change that would adjust the formulas in the natural resource damages compensation table so that they are mathematically capable of achieving the full $1 to $100 per gallon range now required by law.

A natural resource damage assessment is conducted when more than 25 gallons of oil reach surface waters from a spill. The Resource Damage Assessment (RDA) Committee includes representatives from the state departments of Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources, Health, Archeology and Historic Preservation, and the Washington Parks and Recreation Commission. Spillers can either directly pay for habitat restoration projects or deposit the money into the state's Coastal Protection Fund. The RDA Committee uses the fund to pay for environmental restoration and enhancement projects.

Improvements to the Oil Spill Contingency Plan Rules

The state's oil spill contingency plan rules were updated in 2006. This was the first revision to this rule since the early 1990's. Some of the improvements include the first ever standards for oiled wildlife care capability and more strategic caching of equipment towards the outer coast, Puget Sound, the Columbia River, and the San Juan Islands. Facility plans, including pipelines, are now required to prepare for potential ground spills. Additionally, the State's drill program is now incorporated into the rule and more fully described. During 2007, Ecology began receiving revised contingency plans prepared under the new standards. Some of these rule changes will be phased in as companies make required purchases, equipment moves and develop new procedures, training and maintenance programs and further invest in preparedness measures. Field verification of plans now plays a larger part of the plan approval process, for example, inspections are conducted to verify the response equipment preventative maintenance procedures described in plans.

The rule includes a process for the public to review and comment to Ecology on contingency plans. Enhancements to the public involvement process include:

- Response equipment listed on a central webpage that can be downloaded and sorted by location or equipment type (http://www.wrrl.us).
- Plan reviews posted on Ecology's webpage so the public can see what changes are being required in plans.
- A special e-mail "listserv" tool to automatically announce public review opportunities.

Contact Todd Hass at thas461@ecy.wa.gov if you would like to get on the listserv mailing list.

Oil Spill Plans Improved Through Lessons Learned

The Spills Program values the capturing and implementation of lessons learned from drills and oil spills, even if they occur elsewhere in the nation or world. We frequently work with other states for permission to observe or participate in spill responses, read reports from other spills, and participate in lessons learned task forces or workgroups. After the Dalco Passage spill in 2004, we learned that improving the liaison function within the Unified Command structure was critical and began working on the issue. The recent *Cosco Busan* spill has reinforced that lesson, and given us additional ideas to inform and involve communities before and after spills occur. In 2008, drills were designed to focus on lessons for improved wildlife rehabilitation efforts, efficiency in configuration of skimming resources, aerial observation and volunteer management.

MAJOR INCIDENTS: 2007-2008

SS Catala Cleanup at Ocean Shores Completed

The wreck of the *SS Catala* was completely removed in September 2007, after 17 months of effort by a number of organizations under the leadership of Ecology. What could have been a devastating oil spill was avoided. The beach at Damon Point State Park near Ocean Shores, Washington, has been restored.

The *S.S. Catala* ran aground in 1965. Photo courtesy of the Ocean Shores Environmental Interpretive Center.

In total, the operation removed or recycled 34,500 gallons of heavy fuel oil. 360,000 gallons of oily wastewater was collected and transported offsite for treatment. The Legislature provided the Department of Natural Resources with money to remove the hull. The cost for the entire project, including oil removal and beach restoration, totaled $6.9 million. Ecology funded the cleanup using the state's Oil Spill Response Account. Ecology is currently seeking reimbursement from the federal Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund for the cleanup costs. A decision from the Coast Guard is expected in 2009.

The actions to remove oil and the rusting hull of the *SS Catala* were completed just in time. Heavy storms in December 2007 caused significant erosion on Damon Point directly in the area where the *SS Catala* used to lie. Had the *SS Catala's* tanks ruptured during these storms, a catastrophic release would have damaged surrounding natural resources and tourism. The cost of such a clean-up could have been more than $70 million.

> "Your quick response to the situation, more than likely, avoided an oil spill that could have crippled Grays Harbor, damaged productive shellfish beds and taken significantly more millions of dollars to clean up. You did a remarkable job of coordinating several different contractors to remove the shipwreck ahead of schedule and without incident."
>
> – Doug Sutherland *Commissioner of Public Lands*

Twelve Escorts for the Response Tug in 2007-2008 Operating Seasons

The state funded emergency response tug stationed at Neah Bay is an important safety net to prevent disabled ships and barges from grounding in the western Strait of Juan de Fuca or off our outer coast. Over the past two seasons, Crowley Maritime's tug, under contract to the State, was dispatched twelve times to stand by or escort vessels safely to ports inside the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. In eleven of those cases, the vessel in distress had experienced a temporary loss of propulsion, steering, or both.

Since 1999, the tug has deployed to stand by or directly assist 41 vessels that were either completely disabled or had reduced maneuvering ability. On eight of these responses the tug had to take the disabled vessels in tow to prevent them from drifting onto the rocks and spilling oil. The actions taken in those eight cases helped prevent a combined spill potential of nearly 5 million gallons of oil.

Whitley Fuel Fire in Spokane

Fire at Whitley Fuel depot. Photo courtesy of KLXY, Spokane.

In July 2007, a four-alarm arson fire consumed the Whitley Fuel depot located in Spokane. Fortunately the business was closed when the blaze ignited and no one was hurt. More than 17,000 gallons of various types of oil and oily water mix was released, some of which reached the Spokane River. The Spokane County Fire Department used all available firefighting resources and then enlisted the help of the Fairchild Air Force Base and Spokane International Airport. Ecology mobilized with agency responders from around the state to aid in the spill response. Whitley Fuel hired National Response Corporation Environmental Services to clean up the site and boom off portions of the river. The City of Spokane personnel vacuumed and cleaned three miles of storm drains from the Whitley site to the Spokane River. Of the 17,000 gallons of oily water mix released, 9,000 gallons were recovered.

Mysterious Canisters on the Coast

Late last winter, hundreds of one liter canisters washed ashore along the central outer coast of Washington. According to local reports, the silver colored containers with red or white caps had been seen for several months. However, no one reported them to state or federal agencies until March 2008. The incident then received widespread media coverage, and Ecology distributed hundreds of cautionary flyers to coastal residents and park rangers.

Tests of the canisters confirmed the presence of a small amount of phosphine gas – a product of aluminum phosphide – which is used to kill rodents and other pests aboard cargo ships. Ecology and the Coast Guard were not able to determine the source of the canisters. Fortunately, all 55 canisters recovered by Ecology spill responders were empty except for a small residue of the fumigant tablets. It is likely that the emptied containers were either thrown overboard or washed away from a cargo ship that was traveling along the coast of Washington.

Hazardous Materials Cleanup Completed in Lewis County Flood Zone

In August 2008, after nine months of sustained effort, Ecology and Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crews concluded cleanup efforts in the areas where flooding devastated Lewis County last winter. Ecology spill responders and WCC crews located and retrieved more than 2,800 containers deposited by the floodwaters. More than 800 tires were collected and stockpiled for later disposal through an Ecology grant to Lewis County.

To date, the cleanup effort has resulted in the disposal of more than 3,500 gallons of oil, gasoline, paint-related materials, corrosive liquids and pesticides left by the flood. In addition, more than 17,000 pounds of oil contaminated debris and empty oil and hazardous material containers have been safely and properly discarded. Ecology will seek to recover funds spent on the project from the federal Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund.

PERFORMANCE DATA

Vessel Incident/Accident Rate Remains Low

The vessel incident rate remained low in 2007-2008 (see Figure 3). The rate of casualties and near misses stayed below one percent. Ecology uses the incident rate to track trends in the overall safety of the maritime industry. The incident rate is the percentage out of the total number of vessel transits in state waters in which large commercial vessels experience significant problems, such as an oil spill or a loss of propulsion or steering. During the past decade the rate at which vessels have had a spill, near miss or collision, decreased (see Figure 3). The long-term drop in the incident rate is an encouraging indicator that industry, the Coast Guard and state are making progress toward the "zero spills" goal mandated by the 2004 Legislature.

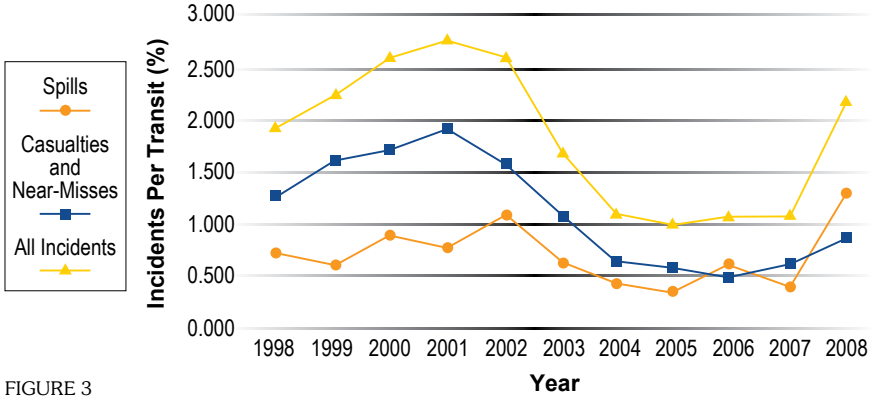


FIGURE 3
Vessel incident rate from 1998-2008 for all Washington waters. Improved compliance by large vessels passing through our waters has led to a long term drop in oil spills and near-misses.

Enforcement Activities

Enforcement actions provide an incentive for companies to prevent spills and meet preparedness and response standards to reduce the monetary consequences of spills. In 2007-2008, the Spills Program issued more than 150 enforcement actions, including field citations, civil penalties, notices of correction or violation, administrative orders and warnings (see Figure 4). The total dollar amount of penalties assessed varies considerably from year to year, depending on the size, location and cause of spills. This figure has ranged from nearly $800,000 in 2005 to $60,000 in 2008.

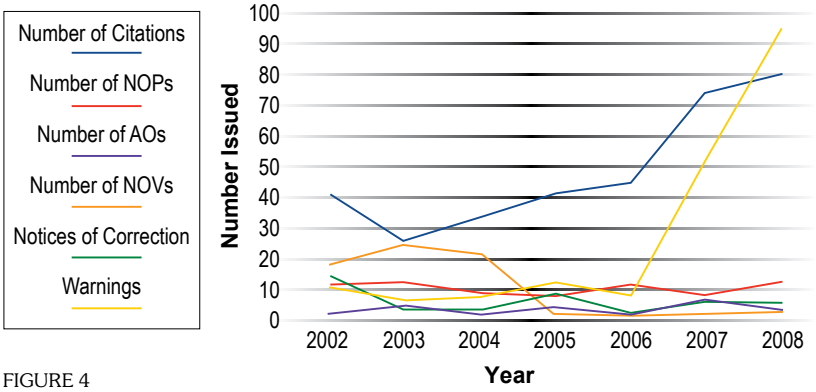


FIGURE 4
Enforcement actions issued 2002-2008. The increase in citations reflects the addition of spill responders in northwest and southwest Washington.

The number of field citations issued annually has doubled since 2002 (Figure 4) as a result of an emphasis on more timely feedback to spillers. Field citations have also increased because additional spill responders have been assigned to previously understaffed areas in northwest and southwest Washington. The substantial drop in notices of violation after 2002 coincides with the development of new oil transfer rules and a focus on technical assistance to reach compliance with the new rules.

Vessel and Facility Inspections are Up

Ecology personnel conducted almost 4,000 vessel and oil handling facility inspections in 2007-2008 (Figure 5). Inspections of vessel fueling or cargo oil transfers increased from 592 in 2006, to 996 in 2007, to nearly 1,500 in 2008. The considerable rise was made possible through the addition of six new inspectors to implement the new oil transfer rules.

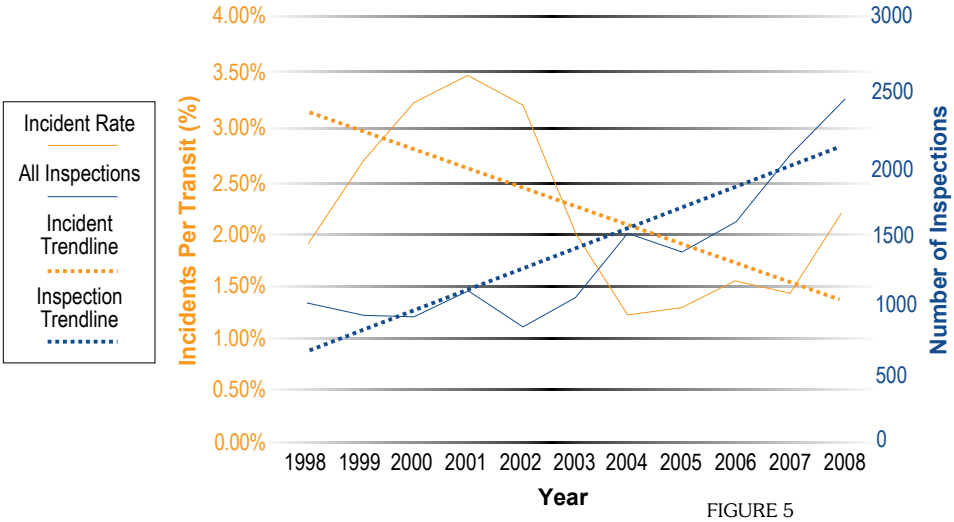


FIGURE 5
The vessel incident rate has declined over the past 11 years as the number of inspections has climbed.

Drills

Since 2005, the Spills Program has evaluated over 400 drills a year in both marine and inland river areas of the state (see Table 1). Participation in drills readies the response community for aggressive, coordinated and successful responses to oil spills. The state's drill evaluation criteria follow the 15 national preparedness drill objectives. There is a high degree of interaction in Washington over the design, participation and evaluation of oil spill drills. Coordination between agencies, industry, and communities is essential for success. It is important to test our capability in all areas of the state (see Figure 6), using all equipment types and addressing all major components of the plans. Variety in drills keeps spill management teams engaged and well prepared.

TYPES OF DRILLS	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Spill Management Annual Tabletop Drills	32	35	23	26	17	19
Worst Case Scenario Tabletop Drill	12	9	3	8	10	10
TOTAL TABLETOPS	**44**	**44**	**26**	**34**	**27**	**29**
Deployment Drills	53	48	52	41	58	62
Geographic Response Plans Tested	15	17	22	17	20	37
Deployment Drill Credit for Actual Spills	3	2	5	1	1	1
TOTAL DEPLOYMENTS	**56**	**50**	**57**	**42**	**59**	**63**
Major Unannounced Drills	1	1	8	0	1	0
Unannounced Vessel Notification Drills	164	248	431	434	406	464
TOTAL UNANNOUNCED	**165**	**249**	**439**	**434**	**407**	**464**
Ecology Drills	2	3	3	1	3	2
TOTAL OF ALL DRILL TYPES	**267**	**346**	**525**	**511**	**496**	**556**

TABLE 1
Oil spill drills from 2003-2008.

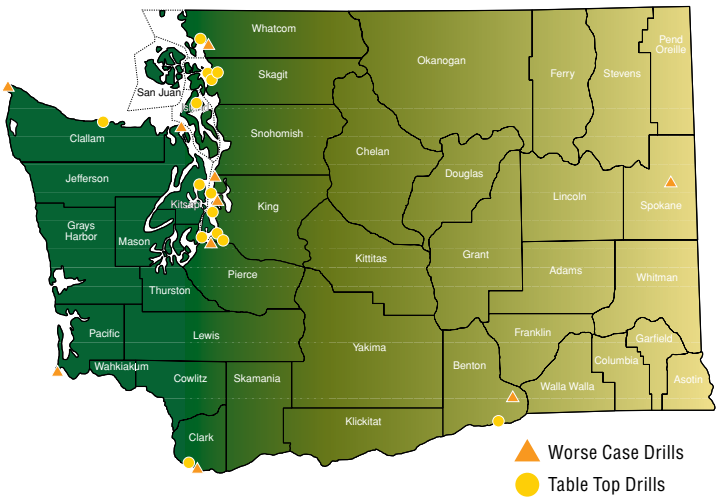


FIGURE 6
Worse case and table top drills were widely distributed across the state in 2008.

2009 AND BEYOND

PRIORITY AREA ONE

Pursuing Financial Stability

Averting a Budget Shortfall in 2009. Without additional funding, the Oil Spill Prevention Account (which funds much of Ecology's Spills Program) is forecasted to experience a revenue shortfall of $8 million in 2009. This budget deficit will affect our ability to protect Washington's environment, economy, quality of life and economic and cultural assets from the effects of spills. The budget shortfall is in part due to the lack of a sustainable level of funding and additional unfunded work directed by the Legislature.

In anticipation of this problem, the 2007 Legislature directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to conduct a study and make recommendations for a long term, risk based funding solution. This study was completed in fall 2008 and will provide legislators and other stakeholders with technical information to be considered during the 2009 Legislative session.

Restoring the Oil Spill Response Account to 1991 Level. In light of the November 2007 *Cosco Busan* spill in San Francisco Bay, we believe it is time to substantially increase the amount of money available in the Oil Spill Response Account. The account covers oil spill cleanup costs when the party responsible for a spill cannot be identified or is unwilling to pay.

Though the two states face comparable economic and environmental risks, California's Oil Spill Response Account is $50 million compared to just $9 million for Washington.

The response account is currently capped at $9 million and we believe it should be restored to the original $25 million level set back in 1991. The response costs for the *Cosco Busan* spill in San Francisco Bay to date have totaled nearly $70 million. At today's level, if a spiller does not pay, the Oil Spill Response Account could be exhausted before an aggressive response could be completed. California has a similar response account with a cap of $50 million and the ability to borrow another $50 million against the account.

Ensuring Large Companies Can Pay for Spill Cleanup. Large oil handling facilities and commercial vessels that operate in Washington waters must show they have the financial means to pay for spill response and cleanup costs, and pay for injuries to state natural resources. Unfortunately, costs for cleaning up and mitigating damage are ever increasing. Ecology will review Washington's financial responsibility requirements and determine if these are still adequate. This may lead to changes in rules or requests to the Legislature for changes in law.

Securing Continuous Emergency Towing Capability to Protect Our Coastline. Washington State has funded an emergency response tug at Neah Bay since 2000. The 2008 Legislature passed special legislation to appropriate funds to extend the tug on station for the current full fiscal year which ends in June 2009.

Senator Maria Cantwell has supported the concept of the Neah Bay tug and has proposed federal pollution prevention legislation that would require vessel companies to fund a Neah Bay emergency response tug. We support this approach as it places the cost of this protective measure on those who pose risk to our waters and also directly benefit from the asset.

The emergency response tug, *Gladiator*. Photo courtesy of Capt. Harry Gardner III.

The Strait of Juan de Fuca is a critical maritime highway shared by Canada and the United States and is one of the key Pacific Rim trade links for our nation. Over 10,000 deep draft tankers, cargo and passenger ships transit through these waters each year. The tankers alone carry over 15 billion gallons of oil through these waters. We cannot accept a lapse in this critical response coverage on our coast while the federal legislation is pending.

PRIORITY AREA TWO

Meeting Higher Expectations for Preventing Spills

Broadening Public Education and Outreach Services. All oil spills, regardless of size, cause environmental harm. As resources allow, we will broaden our outreach campaign aimed at preventing small oil spills to state waters. We will expand our field visits to ports, commercial fishing boats, and marinas around the state, especially to work closely with the state's commercial fishing fleet as it prepares to depart for coastal fishing grounds. We will continue to work with the University of Washington's SeaGrant program, Washington's Clean Marina program, and the Washington Parks and Recreation Commission. These services include providing information to recreational boaters and commercial vessel operators on environmentally safe fueling methods and waste disposal options.

We will improve our existing web site and share information with the public on a variety of important oil spill issues. The goal is to provide reliable, accurate, and timely spill updates to local authorities, the media, volunteers, and the public. We hope to use this tool to alert, register and train volunteers who want to assist with response and wildlife rescue/rehabilitation efforts.

Seeking Delegated Authority from US Coast Guard. Obtaining delegated authority from the US Coast Guard (USCG) to conduct marine safety work on their behalf is a goal for this state. This would allow Ecology to:

- Augment USCG inspection forces and have our highly qualified marine safety professionals conduct expanded cargo and tank vessel inspections.
- Coordinate the review of vessel and facility contingency plans and operations manuals.
- Improve our ability to meet the legislatively mandated goal of "zero spills."
- Optimize our strong partnership with the USCG.

Until we receive formal delegation, we will continue to work under the protocols signed with the Coast Guard on June 26, 2007.

Partnering with the Oregon Board of Maritime Pilots. The Washington Pilotage Commission oversees state pilots operating in Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and Grays Harbor. On the Columbia River, pilots are regulated only by the Oregon Board of Maritime Pilots. Ecology intends to engage the Oregon Board of Maritime Pilots to explore opportunities for Washington State to contribute to the Board's function for management, navigation safety and environmental protection of this critical shared waterway.

PRIORITY AREA THREE

Further Strengthening Oil Spill Readiness and Response

Managing Volunteers during Spills. Managing volunteers is a critical part of ensuring public support and mounting an effective response for major oil spills. Through the Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force, Ecology and other West Coast State response partners created Volunteer Management Planning Guidelines. These guidelines were turned over to the US Environmental Protection Agency and US Coast Guard at their June 2008 National Response Team meeting. The guidelines will provide Area Committees across the nation with a framework to develop Volunteer Management Plans. Ecology is working with the Northwest Area Committee to update the volunteer management policy in the Northwest Area Contingency Plan.

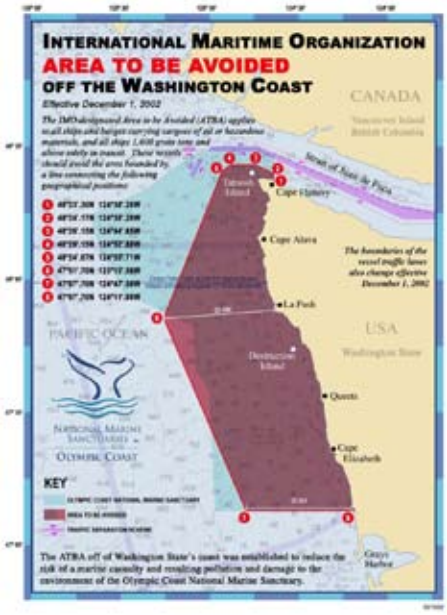
Scores of volunteers helped clean up beaches following the *Cosco Busan* spill in San Francisco Bay. Photo courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard.

Ecology has trained volunteer community Beachwatchers on early assessment of reported oil spills. We are also working with local emergency management agencies and evaluating state policy changes necessary to support oil spill volunteers. In addition, Ecology has advanced our volunteer management strategy by training shoreline cleanup supervisors and preparing health and safety training curriculum for convergent volunteers. We will continue to work with stakeholders and the Legislature to determine if new funding can be provided to continue organizing and coordinating volunteers.

Improving Capabilities for Bird and Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation. A voluntary partnership between industry, non-governmental organizations, state and federal agencies delivered a plan for mobile oiled wildlife rescue and rehabilitation capability. The plan meets the new regulatory standards for oiled wildlife. When deployed together, trailers and other mobile structures owned by Clean Rivers Cooperative, National Response Corporation Environmental Services and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife could handle up to 130 birds within the first 24 hours of a response. This initial capability can then be built into a larger infrastructure if needed for major spills. Purchases and infrastructure improvements are being made now and the equipment will be available for use by 2009. The region is now focusing on new response management efforts for sea otters and orca whales.

Emergency Response System for the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Ecology will work closely with the Coast Guard, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, Makah Tribe, vessel operators, and other stakeholders to continue implementing the Emergency Response System for the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Key objectives for this response system include:

- Maintaining a fully funded, year-round emergency response tug at Neah Bay.
- Continued implementation of the revised oil spill contingency plan rules.
- Monitoring vessels' voluntary compliance with the federally designated "Area to be Avoided" to keep vessels 25 miles off our northern coast, and steer clear of the heart of the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (see image at right).
- Extending Puget Sound's higher volume port area further west to include all waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca between Port Angeles and Neah Bay. Puget Sound is unusual in that its higher volume port area does not extend from the natural coastal ocean entrance to the port terminals.



SPILLS PROGRAM BUDGET

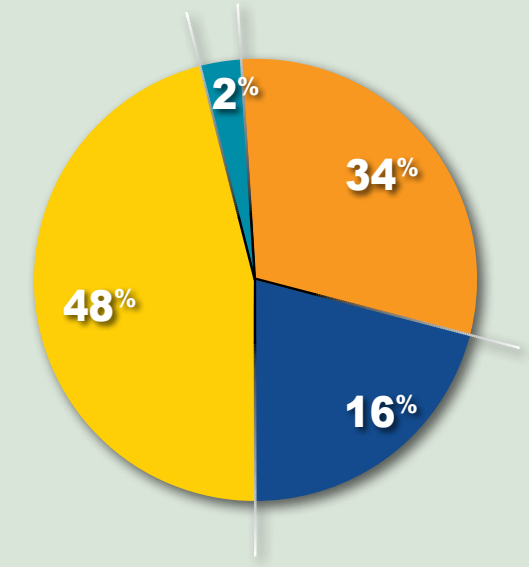


FIGURE 7
Percentage of staff dedicated to specific activities in the Spills Program.

Spills Program Budget

Ecology's Spill Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Program is funded to employ 77 full-time staff. The current biennium budget stands at $32.6 million for the period of July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2009 (2 years). The budget is allocated as follows:

Current Biennium Operating Costs

- Spill Prevention - $6,737,603
- Spill Preparedness - $3,230,362
- Spill Response - $9,680,842
- Natural Resource Damage Assessment - $468,208

All staff positions and operational costs total $20,117,015 (see Figure 7).

Current Biennium Non-operating Costs

- Neah Bay Response Tug - $3,650,000
- Natural Resource Damage Assessment Projects - $1,776,000
- Oil Spill Response Account - $7,078,000

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ECOLOGY
State of Washington